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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001701

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/22/2013

TAGS: MARR MOPS PREL EAID IT IZ IRAOI FREEDOM

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: ITALY NEEDS GUIDANCE ON FIELD HOSPITAL DEPLOYMENT

REF: A. ROME 1679

B. ROME 1660

CLASSIFIED BY: A/DCM TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARA 4.

¶1. (C) THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT, THE PUBLIC, AND THE GOI ARE EAGER TO SUPPORT A HUMANITARIAN MISSION TO IRAQ. FOR THE GOI, THE COMMITMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AID -- IMPORTANT IN AND OF ITSELF -- ALSO PROVIDES THE JUSTIFICATION FOR PUTTING BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN SUPPORT OF PHASE IV (REF A). WE THEREFORE HAVE EVERY INTEREST IN HELPING THE ITALIANS SUCCEED WITH BOTH EFFORTS. THE FOCUS OF THEIR EFFORTS TODAY IS ON DEPLOYING TO IRAQ THE FIELD HOSPITAL THAT THE USG URGENTLY REQUESTED OF ITALY.

¶2. (C) UNFORTUNATELY, THE GOI'S IRAQ TASK FORCE HAS GOTTEN AHEAD OF ITSELF IN MOVING AHEAD WITH PLANNING FOR DEPLOYING A FIELD HOSPITAL TO A SPECIFIC SITE IN BAGHDAD (REF B) WITHOUT PROPER COORDINATION IN TAMPA. A SIX MEMBER SITE SURVEILLANCE TEAM LED BY THE DEPUTY HEAD OF THE MFA'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE OFFICE CROSSED INTO IRAQ FROM JORDAN ON APRIL 20. THE TEAM INFORMED THE EMBASSY IN AMMAN OF ITS TRAVEL PLANS JUST BEFORE ENTERING, BUT FAILED TO WORK THROUGH EITHER CENTCOM OR THIS EMBASSY IN ARRANGING THE VISIT. ACCORDING TO THE MFA, THE TEAM HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH (UNIDENTIFIED) USG OFFICIALS IN BAGHDAD, WHO HAVE INDICATED THAT THE SITE IN BAGHDAD IS APPROPRIATE IF HIGHER CENTCOM OFFICIALS CONCUR. WE ARE PRESSING THE MFA TO PROVIDE MORE DETAIL ON THE TEAM'S ACTIVITIES AND CONTACTS.

¶3. (C) MOREOVER, THE TASK FORCE IS STILL HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE CONCEPT OF A "SELF-DEPLOYABLE/SELF-PROTECTING" FIELD HOSPITAL. DEFMIN MARTINO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR TODAY (SEPTEL) THAT WHILE A 30 MAN-CARABINIERI UNIT WOULD PROVIDE INTERNAL SECURITY FOR THE HOSPITAL, THE GOI WILL ASK THE U.S. MILITARY TO SECURE THE SURROUNDING PERIMETER. WE ARE FOLLOWING UP WITH THE TASK FORCE TO REITERATE THAT 1) CENTCOM HAS THE CALL ON THE HOSPITAL'S LOCATION; 2) COORDINATION WITH CENTCOM SHOULD BE WORKED THROUGH THE ITALIAN LNO, GENERAL SANTINI, IN TAMPA; AND 3) ITALY SHOULD PROVIDE ALL NEEDED SECURITY, BOTH INTERNAL AND PERIMETER.

¶4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: THE GOI, WE WERE TOLD ON APRIL 22 (SEPTEL), MUST STILL SEEK AUTHORIZATION FROM PARLIAMENT FOR DEPLOYING A BRIGADE-SIZE FORCE TO ASSIST WITH PHASE IV STABILIZATION EFFORTS. THIS WILL BE AN EASIER SELL FOR THE GOI IF IT WILL HAVE ALREADY DEPLOYED BY THEN ITS FIELD HOSPITAL IN A SITE ACCEPTABLE TO CENTCOM. EMBASSY REALIZES HOW RAPIDLY THE HUMANITARIAN PICTURE ON THE GROUND IS CHANGING, BUT WE STILL NEED, EITHER FROM SECSTATE OR DIRECTLY FROM CENTCOM, CONFIRMATION THAT THE GOI-PROPOSED LOCATION (REF B) IS ACCEPTABLE. IF IT IS NOT, WE REQUEST THAT CENTCOM EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF SITING THE HOSPITAL NEAR BASRA, WHERE (WE UNDERSTAND) IT IS ENVISIONED THE BULK OF THE ITALIAN MILITARY FORCES WILL EVENTUALLY DEPLOY. END ACTION REQUEST.

SEMBLER

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